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AMBASSADOR MORIARTY'S REMARKS AT THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION FOR THE AMERICAN ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

DHAKA, AUGUST 30 -- U.S. Ambassador James F. Moriarty made the following remarks at the 10th anniversary celebration for the American Alumni Association at a local hotel in Dhaka today:

(Begin Text)

Dr. A.B. Mirza Md. Azizul Islam, Adviser for the Ministry of Finance and Planning; Mr. M.K. Aaref, President of the American Alumni Association; distinguished guests; honorable members of the American Alumni Association; ladies and gentlemen: Assalamu alaikum; shubho sondaya. It is a great pleasure for me to join you tonight on this very special occasion, as we celebrate the 10th anniversary of AAA.

I have certainly enjoyed my first five months in Bangladesh, and I have particularly enjoyed learning about your country. It is a pleasure to spend time with a group of Bangladeshis who know so much about my country and have brought that knowledge back to Bangladesh. One of the concepts that you have brought back from your experience in the United States is the concept of an alumni association.

I am sure that you realized in America just how important alumni are to colleges and universities there. The underlying premise of an alumni association is that we alumni, having enjoyed the benefits of education, have an obligation to make a contribution to assist the next generation. This is an obligation that I take very seriously.

I know that AAA also takes the concept of service to the community seriously. One of the ways that you do that is by providing scholarships to students going to study in the United States. Since 2001, AAA has provided more than \$30,000 in scholarships. We just sent two bright young students to the U.S. this month. That is a sign of how much you value your experience of education in the United States – the fact that you want others to share that experience. AAA can also be proud of its new initiative to provide scholarships

for students of poor families to complete their Higher Secondary Certificate, a must for entering the university system.

Our collective efforts to encourage students to study in the United States are bearing fruit. More than 500 Bangladeshis received student visas to begin their studies this fall in America. This is an increase of more than 43% over last year and is the most since 2000. In addition, the Embassy's Student Advising Center has provided services to more than 17,000 visitors so far this year. I think that one of the reasons for this success is the close cooperation between the Embassy's Student Advising Section at Public Affairs, the Consular Section, AAA and alumni such as you.

While I am pleased that so many students are about to embark on a course of studies in the U.S., I will not be satisfied until every qualified Bangladeshi student is able to live his or her dream of an American higher education. To make this a reality will take a commitment from my government to ensure qualified students are able to receive student visas in a timely fashion. It will take a commitment from schools and universities in the U.S. to look to Bangladesh as a place to recruit the leaders of tomorrow. And it will take a commitment from AAA and its members to lead by example, to demonstrate that their American experience has helped to turn them into this generation's leaders. Together we can do more.

Studying in the United States is the right choice for many students. American universities are the best in the world and offer unlimited options for the independent learner. You are the proof that there is a program for everyone in the United States. I call on all of you to actively encourage the young people that you know to study in the United States.

Tell them about the quality of education that you received there – members of AAA have studied at colleges and universities across America. Tell them that every qualified aspiring student will find the right school someplace in the U.S. Tell them about living in America. Tell them about the availability of financial aid and scholarships that can make an American education surprisingly affordable for foreign students. Tell them that there are resources at the Embassy and AAA that will help them realize their dreams.

The United States gains when bright international students decide to come to our country to study. American students learn about other parts of the world and build

friendships with foreign students that last a lifetime. Just as important, many of today's international students will put their U.S. educations to good use and become the leaders of tomorrow, in fields as diverse as business, politics, and the arts.

Many of Bangladesh's current leaders - including President Iajuddin Ahmed, Chief Adviser Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed, and Nobel Laureate Dr. Mohammad Yunnus - are all alumni of American universities. As an American, I'm proud of the contributions that our alumni have made in Bangladesh and in many other countries around the world.

Once again, I congratulate AAA on its 10th anniversary, and I wish this important organization continued success in the future. Thank you.

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** As prepared for delivery*

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